Deliberations in UN General Assembly

*55. SHRI AIMADUDDIN AHMED KHAN (DURRU): Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what were the main issues relating to peace and security in the South Asian region and world peace raised by the Prime Minister in the UN General Assembly in September, this year;

(b) what was the response of the big powers and the consensus of the UN General Assembly thereon; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) Prime Minister addressed the UN General Assembly on 13th September 2002. PM's address covered several issues relating to world peace and peace and security in South Asia. Full text of PM's statement is enclosed. (*See* below)

(b) and (c) PM's statement which forms a part of the record of the UN has been noted by world leaders and delegates to the UNGA.

Statement

Address by

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee Prime Minister of India

At the 57th Session of the

United Nations General Assembly

New York

Mr. President,

I congratulate you on your election as President of the 57th General Assembly. We wish you success and pledge our whole-hearted support.

I also extend my best wishes to Secretary General Kofi Annan in this first year of his second term in office.

Mr. President,

Two days ago, we commemorated the first anniversary of a terrible event, which focused the collective global consciousness on international

terrorism. Terrorism did not start on September 11. It was on that day that it brazenly announced itself on the global stage, flaunting its immunity from distance and power.

As a country exposed to the depredations of terrorism for decades, India empathized with the pain of the American people, admired their resilience in coming to terms with the consequences, and supported the bold decision to counter-attack terrorism at its very source.

The international community has taken some collective decisions in the global effort to combat terrorism and to choke off its lifelines. The U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 contains the essence of these decisions. Its Counter-Terrorism Committee should now move beyond information compilation and legal assistance to enforcing compliance by states known to be sponsoring, sheltering, funding, arming and training terrorists.

In our South Asian region, nuclear blackmail has emerged over the last few months as a new arrow in the quiver of State-sponsored terrorism. Dark threats were held out that actions by India to stamp out cross-border terrorism could provoke a nuclear war. To succumb to such blatant nuclear terrorism would mean forgetting the bitter lessons of the September 11 tragedy.

As far as India is concerned, we have repeatedly clarified that no one in our country wants a war—conventional or otherwise. Nor are we seeking any territory.

But absolutely everyone in India wants an end to the cross-border terrorism which has claimed thousands of innocent lives and denied entire generations their right to a peaceful existence with normal economic and social activity. We are determined to end it with all the means at our command. Let there be no doubt about it in any quarter.

Mr. President,

Yesterday we heard the extraordinary claim in this Assembly that the brutal murder of innocent civilians in Jammu & Kashmir is actually a "freedom struggle". And that the forthcoming elections in that state are a "farce", since they cannot be a substitute for a plebiscite demanded over 50 years ago.

It requires an effort of logical acrobatics to believe that carnage of innocents is an instrument for freedom and elections are a symbol of deception and repression!

If the elections are a mere fraud, why are terrorists being trained and infiltrated into India at the command of the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan to kill election candidates and to intimidate voters?

If Pakistan claims to be a crucial partner in the international coalition against terrorism, how can it continue to use terrorism as an instrument of state policy against India?

How can the international coalition condone Pakistan-directed killings of thousands of innocent civilians—women and children included—to promote a bizarre version of "self-determination"?

Those who speak of "underlying" or "root" causes of terrorism, offer alibis to the terrorists and absolve them of responsibility for their heinous actions—such as the September 11 attacks on the united States or the December 13 attack on our Parliament.

General Musharraf has himself admitted that rigging was responsible for his winning the referendum by a dubious margin of 90 per cent in April this year. As for the "true" democracy he intends to establish in Pakistan, he has rendered it impotent even before the elections are held next month.

Those who had to "adjust" voting and counting procedures to win a referendum—and achieved constitutional authority by the simple expedient of writing their own constitution—are ill-placed to lecture others on freedom and democracy.

Mr. President,

yesterday we heard yet another patently false and self-serving claim that in India, Muslims and other minorities are the target of "Hindu extremists". With 150 million, India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, more than in Pakistan. We are proud of the multi-religious character of our society. Equal respect for all faiths, and non-discrimination on the basis of religion, is not just our Constitutional obligation. As the whole world knows, it is the signature tune of India's civilisation and culture.

Mr. President,

We have to recognize that the developmental divide between the North and the South is becoming wider and deeper by the day. The challenges that face us are stark and there is no alternative to all the countries of the world joining hands to face them together.

Over the last decade, 10 million people have been joining the ranks of the poor each year. A quarter of the world's population lives in extreme poverty.

A million lives are lost to malaria each year. Tuberculosis claims twice as many lives annually. One-fifth of humanity does not have access to safe drinking water.

We have to find US$ 24 billion annually for investment in poor countries if we are to achieve the World Food Summit goal of halving hunger by 2015.

It was this bleak picture that we addressed in our Millennium Declaration in 2000 with a time-bound road map for poverty eradication, with goals and targets to be achieved by 2015. The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development was an encouraging beginning in the effort to enhance international financing for development.

Continuation of widespread poverty, at a time when unimaginable wealth is concentrated in a small social layer, is totally unacceptable. The 21st century has all the means to end this sad legacy of the past centuries. What is lacking is the political will among the developed countries to sincerely and speedily address the legitimate developmental needs of the developing countries, especially the least developed ones.

The poor of the world, as also the more enlightened sections of the rich around the world, would like the United Nations to spearhead efforts to end the systemic indifference towards poverty. The agenda of action that would achieve this objective is clear:

One, asymmetry in trading relations between developing and developed nations; the problem of declining prices for commodities from developing countries; and all unjustified barriers to their exports must be removed.

Two, extreme volatility in global energy markets has been causing havoc with the trade and fiscal balances of developing countries. This must end.

Three, unpredictability in global capital movements, which periodically devastate the economies of developing countries, must be controlled.

Four, malfeasant corporate practices, which drain off the natural resources and traditional knowledge base of developing countries without fair compensation, must be dealt with sternly.

Casting an even longer shadow over this grim developmental canvas is global climate change—from which the poor will suffer the most, though they contributed the least to it. The recent floods and forest fires in Europe are a forewarning that the countries of Asia and Africa are not the only victims of the fury of a degraded environment. The Earth's atmosphere and biosphere know no national boundaries. The choice before the global community is stark: Either we take urgent steps to protect the environment, or be prepared for far worse natural calamities.

Early this month, the Johannesburg Summit for Sustainable Development debated some of the linkages between poverty, trade, environment, national, international & corporate governance and global financial flows. We emerged from the Summit with some encouraging outcomes, but these fell well short of the demands of our time.

It has become a categorical imperative to understand, and address, man's developmental needs in their totality—and not in isolated parts. It is disconcerting that the highways of development are jammed by the noisy and unruly traffic of materialism and its brash cousin, consumerism. Human values have become mute bystanders in most political, economic and social activities.

The result of this imbalance between our material and non-material needs can never be happy for mankind. On the contrary, by placing compassion, care, fellow feeling, cooperation and other human values in the driver's seat, we are bound to get the right solutions to every problem on our planet.

Humanity is crying out for a harmonious integration of the economic, social political, environmental and spiritual dimensions of development. This task calls for the closest possible cooperation among nations and communities, with a readiness to accept the best from every cultural and spiritual tradition around the globe. The United Nations needs to take up newer and bigger initiatives in this direction.

In this Assembly, less than a year ago—and in the US Congress the year before—I had extended India's offer to coordinate a Comprehensive Global Development Dialogue. I reiterate that offer today. If we are to achieve the development goals we have promised ourselves by 2015, we need such a dialogue urgently.

Mr. President,

As we come together once again at the United Nations, at a time of new and varied challenges, we should reflect on our collective commitment to the UN Charter, its purposes and principles. There is a growing perception—particularly among the weaker and poorer countries—that responses to issues of farreaching impact often seem arbitrary or contradictory.

A common destiny is at stake. The world needs collective multilateralism. It needs the United Nations—the coming together and working together of all its nations in the development of a common and collective perspective.

Conflicts arise when there is no spirit of democracy within and among nations. A genuinely democratic framework enables us to respect alternative points of view, to value diversity, and to fashion solutions responsive to the aspirations of the people.

India's own experience as a hugely populated and diverse nation shows how complex problems can be addressed within a constitutional and democratic framework.

These values need to be assiduously nurtured in our societies, so that at least a future generation is rid of the scourge of poverty, intolerance, obscurantism and religious extremism.

Democratic societies are far less prone to ideologies based on violence or militarist yearnings, since they do not have their fingers permanently on the trigger of a gun. We have to be vigilant against threats to democracy worldwide arising from forces that are opposed to it, be they rooted in fundamentalist political dogmas or extremist religious ideologies.

Mr. President,

All of us are aware of the challenges. Most of us are agreed that a stable global order has to rest on the four strong pillars of peace, security, sustainable development and democracy. We have to ensure that each of these pillars is strong and resilient.

We are conscious of our collective responsibility. It is the leap from this theoretical understanding to its practical realization, which we have often failed to execute. We should not fail again. Our future generations will not forgive us if we do.

Thank you.

Rotting of grains in FCI godowns

†*56. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a large quantity of old stock of food grains is rotting in the godowns of Food Corporation of India? If so, the number of such godowns and how old are the grains lying there;

(b) whether the rotten grains have been released for distribution, if so, by whose order and the justification of distributing the rotten grains; and

(c) the arrangements made by Government to maintain the movement of grains?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (c) Foodgrains which are unfit for human consumption, regardless of age, are termed as

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.